

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 8, 2003 has been reviewed and the comments of the Patent and Trademark Office have been considered. Claims 1-17 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 9, 10, 12-15, and 17 have been amended, claim 8 has been canceled, and no claims have been newly added. Therefore, claims 1-7 and 9-17 are pending in the application and are submitted for reconsideration.

This amendment changes and deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, are presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. Please note that the amendments to claims 2, 5-7, 9, 10, 12, 15, and 17 address formal matters and do not change their scope in any way.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 7, 13, and 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 5,745,593 (Wahawisan). Claims 1, 2, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by an article "Real-Time Image Processing Using Transputers" (Teoh article). Claims 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wahawisan as applied to claim 2 above and further in view of U.S. patent 6,070,155 (Cherrington). Claims 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Teoh article as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of U.S. patent 6,477,266 (Asar). Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Teoh article and Asar as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of U.S. patent 6,185,324 ("Ishihara"). Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wahawisan as applied to claim 16 above and further in view of U.S. patent 5,699,447 (Alumot).

Independent claim 1 includes the limitations contained in the originally filed claim 8. Similar amendments to the other independent claims 13 and 14 have also been made.

As acknowledged in the Office Action, the features recited in the originally filed claim 8 (and now recited in independent claims 1, 13, and 14) is not disclosed or suggested by any of the cited references other than Asar. Paragraph 6 of the Office Action states that Teoh does not disclose the image characteristic guiding means. However, the Office Action asserts that Asar discloses an image characteristic guiding means in col. 6, lines 50-60 and Fig. 17.

However, the claimed image characteristic guiding means (or step) guides a setting operation of an image characteristic of the image of the product subjected to inspection corresponding to a desired type of inspection. This recited feature is not disclosed or suggested by Asar. The cited portion of Asar merely discloses that a user can scroll through sub-portions of an image to be inspected and based on the inspection provide a tag list box that identifies the defects identified during the visual inspection. See col. 6, lines 28-60 and Fig. 17 of Asar. In particular, Asar does not disclose or suggest a guiding means or step that guides the setting of an image characteristic of the image of the product being inspected corresponding to the desired type of inspection.

The claimed features require that one of the plurality of types of inspection (presence, conform, orientation, position, dimension, chip and burr, and surface) be selected and the image characteristic guidance means or step provides for setting of the image characteristic corresponding to the selected type of the inspection. For example, the claimed invention allows, for the presence type of inspection, that the image characteristic of shape, size, or brightness (for example, when compared to a reference image) can be specified or set using claimed image characteristic guiding means. Such a image characteristic guiding means or step is not disclosed or suggested by Asar or any of the other cited references. Accordingly, the independent claims 1, 13, and 14 are patentable over the applied prior art.

The dependent claims are also patentable for the at least the same reasons as the independent claim 1 on which they ultimately depend. In addition, they recite additional patentable features when considered as a whole.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant believes that the application is now in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding the application, or if an examiner's amendment would facilitate the allowance of one or more of the claims, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper, or if a petition for extension of time is required for timely acceptance of same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account No. 19-0741 for any such fees; and applicant hereby petitions for any needed extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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FOLEY & LARDNER LLP

Customer Number: 22428

Telephone: (202) 672-5485

Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

By

Aaron C. Chatterjee

William T. Ellis

Registration No. 26,874

Aaron C. Chatterjee

Registration No. 41,398

Attorneys for Applicant